

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FY 76 IN-STORE-PROMOTION, UNITED KINGDOM

REF: LONDON A-3L4, APRIL 3, 1975

1. SUMMARY

SELFRIDGES UNABLE TO COMMIT ITSELF TO IN-STORE-PROMOTION IN FY 76. BASIC REASON LACK OF SUFFICIENT U.S. LINES NECESSARY MEET CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS. OTHER PROBLEMS ALSO CITED INCLUDE FAILURE GET SATISFACTORY THEME VEHICLE FROM U.S. SOURCES. DESPITE WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION IN U.K., POST PLANS EXPLORE ON PRIORITY BASIS POSSIBILITY OTHER MAJOR RETAIL OUTLETS WILL BE INTERESTED.

2. SELFRIDGES POSITION:

ON JUNE 24, 1975 SELFRIDGES DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER, PETER WILLIAMS AND PROMOTION MANAGER ALLAN MILLARD MET WITH EMBOFF. ON BASIS FOLLOWING POINTS, IT WAS CLEAR IN THEIR VIEW PROMOTION NOT FEASIBLE AT THIS TIME:

A. SAMPLING OF PRODUCTS SELECTED BY BUYERS AT CHICAGO LAST YEAR, WHICH ARE COMPETITIVE IN QUALITY AND PRICE, HAVE BEEN TEST MARKETING FOR TWO MONTHS NOW WITH AN UNEXPLAINABLE LACK OF BUYER RESPONSE.

B. FOLLOW-UP MAILING TO AMERICAN BREAKFAST (REFAIR) WENT TO APPROXIMATELY 200 U.S. FIRMS BASED IN THE U.K. SEEKING THEIR PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT, WITH ONLY SEVEN REPLIES STATING WILLINGNESS PARTICIPATE IN BICENTENNIAL (OR OTHER TYPE) PROMOTION. (WE BELIEVE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE U.K. MAIN REASON FOR POOR

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RESPONSE; PARTICULARLY TIGHT MONEY SITUATION).

C. RECENT BUYER SURVEY SHOWS AT LEAST 50 PERCENT SELFRIDGES SALES ARE NOW TO TOURISTS - A SHIFT FROM AN ESTIMATED FIGURE OF 15 PERCENT IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT PAST. TOURISTS, THE BULK FROM THE CONTINENT, ARE SEEKING BARGAINS BASED ON DEVALUED POUND. THEY HAVE INDICATED PREFERENCE FOR BRITISH PRODUCTS - ESCHEWING FOR EXAMPLE CZECH SUITS, FRENCH FASHIONS AS WELL AS U.S. MERCHANDISE. SELFRIDGES EXPECTS THIS SHIFT IN CUSTOMER MAKE-UP TO LAST FOR SOME TIME.

D. ALTHOUGH EMBOFFS AND USDOC OFFICIALS FROM BEGINNING MADE CLEAR TO SELFRIDGES WE COULD NOT PROMISE USG COULD GET MAJOR PROMOTIONAL VEHICLE, WILLIAMS AND MILLARD EXPRESSED REGRET THAT ITEMS OFFERED FROM THE STATES WERE FOR MOST PART TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE - FOR EXAMPLE APPALACHIAN HANDICRAFTS. THEY EXPECTED SPEEDY FOLLOW-UP ON MOON ROCK COMMITMENT (MADE PERSONALLY BY U.S. OFFICIALS WHILE MILLARD AND WILLIAMS WERE IN WASHINGTON) WITH SOMETHING LIKE SPACE SUITS AND MOCK-UP OF A LANDING CRAFT. THIS FOLLOW-UP, SELFRIDGES CLAIMS, WAS NOT FORTHCOMING. HAWAIIAN DANCERS LEAD, IN SELFRIDGES OPINION, TURNED OUT TO BE WAY TOO EXPENSIVE AND IN ANY CASE ONLY DOUBTFULLY AVAILABLE. PUSHED ON DISPLAY THEME ISSUE, HOWEVER, BOTH MILLARD AND WILLIAMS AGREED LACK BUYER RESPONSE REASON FOR NOT GOING AHEAD WITH PROMOTION.

3. EMBASSY ACTION:

SINCE IN-STORE-PROMOTION WITH SELFRIDGES NO LONGER POSSIBLE, WE PLAN APPROACH HARROD'S AND DEBENHAM'S THIS WEEK ON PRIORITY BASIS.

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